

REMARKS

Entry of this amendment and favorable reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claims 1-9 and 18-31 remain in the case.

Nonelected Claims 10-17 have been canceled without prejudice to their presentation in a divisional application.

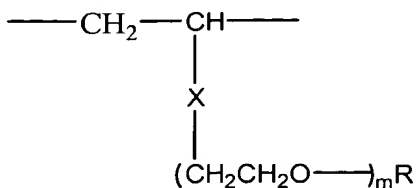
Claims 25-31 stand allowed.

The interview kindly granted by the Examiner, Ms. Chaney, on February 26, 2004 is herewith acknowledged with appreciation. The herein directed amendment to the claims was discussed with the Examiner at said interview and she stated that it will be entered and will overcome the art of record.

Claims 1-9 and 18-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Giles et al.

These rejections are traversed, particularly in view of the amendment to the claims. The invention as defined by Claim 1, as now amended, relates to a solidifying material for a cell electrolyte solution, characterized in that said solidifying material is a block copolymer comprising, as segments A, a polymer non-compatible with said cell electrolyte solution and, as segments B, a polymer compatible with said cell electrolyte solution, and absorbs and solidifies said cell electrolyte solution; a smallest unit of said block copolymer is A-B-A; and to each of said segments B, at least one group selected from the group consisting of only a carboxyl group, an ester group, a hydroxyl group, a sulfonic group, an amino group and a cyclic carbonate group is bonded via a -S- bond or a -C- bond.

The claims, as presently amended, clearly are no longer anticipated by, nor even obvious from, Giles et al. Specifically, the Examiner relies on the disclosure by Giles et al. at column 20, lines 5-21 of the attached group being of the following formula:



wherein X can be an ester linkage, as anticipating the claims.

It was pointed out to the Examiner at said interview that the claims, as now amended, no longer possibly read on such group. The claims, as now amended, specifically also exclude a polyoxyalkylene group being indirectly bonded to segments B, as is the case in Giles et al., and require and are limited to only a carboxy group, an ester group, a hydroxyl group, a sulfonic group, an amino group or a cyclic carbonate group being bonded to segments B. The Examiner thus agreed that the claims, as presently amended, patentably distinguish over the art.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 is requested.

It is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and which is solicited.

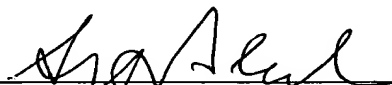
Respectfully submitted,

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